Innovation platforms for agricultural development case studies: Introduction, synthesis and conclusion module – Questions and answers

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Notes

To generate discussion around key themes, we have provided an exhaustive list of questions (with suggested answers and talking points) for this teaching note. The facilitator may pick 1-2 questions per section, depending on the need and level of the audience, to make sessions more interactive.

We have devised a range of questions, including multiple-choice questions, discussion questions and class activities. These are classified as 'introductory level' (suitable for all, including those new to the innovation platform world) and 'advanced level' (intended for sessions with more experienced learners).

Multiple-choice questions can be done as a clicker exercise. You can tabulate the results of the entire group and then discuss any answers where the learners differ widely or are completely off the mark in their answers.

Material sources:

Schut, M., Cadilhon, J.-J., Misiko, M. and Dror, I. 2016. The state of innovation platforms in agricultural research for development. In: Dror, I., Cadilhon, J.-J., Schut, M., Misiko, M. and Maheswari, S. (eds), *Innovation platforms for agricultural development: Evaluating the mature innovation platform landscape*. Oxon, UK: Routledge. pp 1-15.

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Introduction: Background

Introductory level

Discussion questions

Q1. What are innovation platforms (IPs), and what role do they play in the field of agricultural research for development?

A1. Innovation platforms (IPs) build on experiences with earlier well-known multi-stakeholder approaches (including farmer field schools, participatory research, local agricultural research committees and natural resource management platforms) to foster agricultural innovation by strengthening interaction and sustained, long-term collaboration in networks of farmers, extension officers, policy makers, researchers, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), development donors, the private sector and other stakeholder groups. IP interventions can be both technological and institutional in nature.

Q2. Why do IPs seek to stimulate continuous involvement of stakeholders in describing and explaining complex agricultural problems and exploring, implementing and monitoring the agricultural innovations that can address these problems?

A2. There are three reasons why IPs promote continuous involvement in identifying and solving agricultural problems:

- First, different stakeholder groups can provide insights about the biophysical, technological and institutional dimensions of the problem and ascertain what innovations are economically, socially, culturally and politically viable.
- Second, stakeholder groups become aware of their interdependency on one another and recognize the need for concerted action to address their constraints and reach their objectives.
- Third, stakeholder groups are more likely to support and promote innovations when they have taken part in the decision-making or development process.

Q3. What is the 'capacity to innovate'? How do IPs strengthen the capacity to innovate across stakeholder groups?

A3. The 'capacity to innovate' is the ability of individuals, groups or systems to continuously shape or adapt to change. If the capacity to innovate is high, individuals, groups and systems are better able to react proactively, flexibly and creatively to shocks, challenges and opportunities. By facilitating interaction between different stakeholder groups, IPs provide space not only for the exchange of knowledge and learning but also for negotiating and dealing with power dynamics. By bringing people together, IPs can strengthen capacity to innovate among interdependent groups of stakeholders to:

- Continuously identify and prioritize problems and opportunities in a dynamic systems environment.
- Take risks, experiment with social and technical options and assess the trade-offs that arise from these.
- Mobilize resources and form effective support coalitions around promising options and visions for the future.
- Link with others to access, share and process relevant information and knowledge in support of the above.
- Collaborate and coordinate with others and achieve effective concerted action.

Q4. What variables affect the performance and impact of an IP?

A4. Multiple variables can affect an IP's performance and impact. The quality of platform organization

and facilitation, communication within the IP and institutional embedding determine whether IPs can lead to real change and impact. It can be difficult to break from the pattern in which science develops and tests technologies that are then transferred to end users (generally farmers), and multiple researchers have found that working outside of linear, top-down systems can make it difficult to obtain resources to fund interventions. It is essential to understand the various factors and processes that contribute to an IPs impact, and it is equally important to recognize that although IPs can foster meaningful innovation, they cannot provide a solution to all agricultural problems.

Multiple-choice questions

Q5. Which of the following is not a common feature of an innovation platform?

A. Participation from multiple stakeholder groups
B. Top-down decision-making processes
C. Knowledge sharing
D. Communication among collaborators

A5. Answer: B

Introduction: Case study competition process

Introductory level

Discussion questions

Q6. Why did the ILRI launch the IP case study competition? What qualities did they seek from competition entrants? Why did ILRI seek these qualities?

A6. ILRI launched the IP case study competition to build upon key studies of innovation platforms by showcasing the most innovative ideas, best practices, actionable knowledge and strategies emerging from mature IPs in agricultural research for development (AR4D). The competition sought case studies that feature mature IPs that have had a proven, large-scale impact. ILRI also encouraged submissions that featured principles, methodologies and ideas that could be broadly applicable to a wide variety of contexts. Accordingly, they solicited case studies that addressed (1) systems trade-offs, (2) multiple-commodity platforms, (3) scalable agricultural innovations, and (4) lessons learned from failures.

Q7. What factors were used to evaluate case studies submitted to the competition?

A7. Case studies were evaluated on three main categories:

- Content strength: case studies should clearly define the problems and challenges being addressed, construct a detailed and descriptive narrative of how various stakeholders used the IP to create solutions and encourage further thinking and debate on the topic.
- Quality of writing: case studies should be logically written, with a strong emphasis on good writing and presentation.
- Usefulness: case studies should feature only those interventions/programs that meet assessment criteria and that have demonstrated long-standing impact. Case studies must feature solutions that are replicable, scalable, sustainable, reliable and relevant from the broader agricultural community.

Q8. What process did ILRI determine which case studies to include in the book innovation platforms for agricultural development?

A8. ILRI shortlisted the 12 case studies that addressed one (or more) of the four topics and met its evaluation criteria. The lead authors of these 12 cases were invited to attend a writeshop in Nairobi in February 2015. At this writeshop, authors received writing guidelines, mentoring from experts, training on developing a case outline, telling stories and identifying their case's selling points, as well as the opportunity to collaborate with subject matter experts and communication experts from different CGIAR centres. Writeshop participants were given three weeks to finalize and submit their case studies, and after reviewing the 12 submissions using scoring criteria, the editorial team found that 8 of the 12 cases were suitable for publication.

Multiple-choice questions

Q9. Which of the following criteria were used to evaluate submitted case studies:

A. Content strength
B. Quality of writing
C. Usefulness
D. All of the above

A9. Answer: D

Q10. On which of the following topics did ILRI encourage submissions?

A. Platforms using only cutting-edge technology

B. Platforms that were only relevant in certain climates
C. Platforms focusing on multiple commodities
D. None of the above
A10. Answer: C

Advanced level

Class activity
Q11. ILRI focused on four different topics: systems trade-offs, multiple commodities, scalability and learning from failure. If you were designing a similar case study competition, what categories would you include? Why would you include them?
A11. Answers will likely vary, but they should focus on leveraging the potential benefits of innovation platforms as outlined above.

Introduction: Case study characterization and readers' guide

Introductory level

Discussion questions

Q12. What is the geographical spread of the case studies?

A12. Innovation platforms for agricultural development includes case studies from three continents. One study covers Nicaragua in Central America, and two studies cover cases in India in Asia. Five case studies cover African nations. Four of these case studies address Eastern Africa, there is one case study on Ethiopia, one on Kenya, and two on Uganda, and one addresses the Central African nations of Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda. The book organizes its case studies by geographical location, from west to east.

Q13. What are the life stages of innovation platforms? How does this relate to age?

A13. Rather than focusing on age, the editors evaluated an IP's maturity on multiple aspects, including whether the platforms were embedding multiple commodities, were addressing system trade-offs or had good inroads in terms of policy impact and scaling. In addition, the editors situated case studies along a continuum that gauged their level of maturity. A platform is born when it is established. In its childhood, a platform concentrates on identifying the problem it will collaboratively solve. The adolescent stage is marked by trials and errors in implementing innovative activities. IPs reach adulthood when their first impacts have been achieved and they start scaling up their activities for further outreach. Maturity is achieved when IPs begin tackling other R&D problems and strive to scale their innovations even further. IPs die whenever they solve the issue they were meant to address or when external funding dries up and there are no internal resources to finance the platform. Each case study in Innovation platforms for agricultural development has reached or passed the adolescent stage.

Q14. What are the key characteristics of multi-stakeholder processes in IPs?

A14. Multi-stakeholder collaboration in IPs are characterized by:

- Participatory and demand-driven research and development activities, which not only provides better insight into the information, technology and service needs for different groups and their communication and collaboration preferences towards achieving development impact, but which also increases buy-in among stakeholders, who are more likely to support and promote innovations when they have been part of the innovation and decision-making process. Participatory and demand-driven research also supports the continuous alignment of research and development strategies as contexts and stakeholder developments change. This requires adaptability on the part of participants. The CIALCA, MilkIT, and Mukono-Wakiso cases offer good examples of how stakeholder participation and demand-driven research can strengthen the contribution of IPs to achieving development impact.
- The capacity for collective agency and action. When stakeholders collaborate in an IP, they recognize that they are interdependent on one another, which in turn highlights the need for concerted, collective action. The CIALCA, NLA, and Bubaare case studies highlight collective agency and action.

Q15. How did ILRI assess content matter?

A15. When evaluating the content matter, the editors looked at three types of agricultural innovations:

1. Novel technologies and management practices to increase productivity. The CIALCA, SysCom, WeRATE and Mukono-Wakiso case studies address productivity innovation.

2. Responsible natural resource management (NRM) that deal with low soil fertility, low yields, erosion, deforestation and climate change. The NBDC and SysCom cases deal with NRM innovations.
3. Institutional innovation, which can include enhanced collaboration between stakeholders, social infrastructure, access to finance, certification, land tenure arrangements and public goods and markets. The CIALCA, MilkIT, and Bubaare case studies provide good examples of how IPs can contribute to institutional innovation.

In a systems approach, productivity, NRM, and institutional innovations need to emerge in an integrated way, making smart use of available agro-ecological and human resources across different system levels. Both the CIALCA and SysCom cases address two of the three types of agricultural innovation that the editors were searching for when assessing the content matter.

Q16. What platform support functions are critical for success in research for development (R4D) interventions?

A16. Four major critical success functions are critical for success in R4D interventions:

1. Facilitation, which is usually fulfilled with a small team of people. Facilitators ensure that there are sufficient linkages (or connections) among participants and other stakeholders and empower participants who are taking part in the process. The Mukono-Wakiso case from Uganda provides an in-depth description of facilitation and its impact on a platform.
2. Organization, or the provision of logistical support, backstopping of events and administering the accountability of work. Organization includes tasks such as renting venues, providing lunch and handling finances. Both the Ugandan Bubaare and Mukono-Wakiso cases stand out in terms of their reflection on platform organization.
3. Documentation, or the systematic and participatory capturing and reporting of events and developments. IP members should participate in monitoring and information should be gathered continuously and fed back quickly. Doing so provides a tool for reflection on both the platform and the process and its ability to develop solutions to concrete problems. The NLA and Mukono-Wakiso cases excel at documentation.
4. Research, which is critical. In the current AR4D landscape, the enthusiasm of researchers who champion process research is highly correlated with sufficient prioritizing of learning tasks and funding the learning activities. The Mukono-Wakiso case provides particular attention to platform research, which stands out overall in terms of its attention to platform support functions.

Q17. How did the editors assess outcomes and impact?

A17. The editors assessed outcomes and impacts using four categories:

1. Systems trade-offs, or exploring synergies and competition between different interventions and strategies. Trade-offs can be financial, social or technological in nature. The NBDC case provides good examples of how IPs can support optimization of systems trade-offs.
2. Multiple commodities, or managing complex interactions (such as crop-livestock-trees). The WeRATE case from Kenya and the Bubaare and Mukono-Wakiso cases from Uganda provide good examples of handling multiple commodities.
3. Scaling up of agricultural innovations, or using new technologies, disseminating knowledge, collaborating between different stakeholder groups, providing access to markets etc. beyond the IP's original scope, geographical focus or target audience. The WeRATE case offers an excellent example of reaching impact at scale.

4. Learning from failure, or the ability to glean lessons from failed platforms. There were no submissions to the competition that addressed this category.

Multiple-choice questions

Q18. Which of the following correctly describes the 'adolescent' phase of an IP?

A. The IP concentrates on identifying the problems it will solve collaboratively
B. The IP experiences its first trials and errors in implementing innovative activities
C. The IP reaches its first impacts and starts scaling up its activities for further outreach
D. None of the above
A18. Answer: B

Q19. Which of the following characteristics were used to assess the case studies' content matter?

A. Systems trade-offs, multiple commodities, scaling up innovations and learning from failure
B. Facilitation, organization, documentation and research
C. Increasing productivity, responsible NRM innovations, institutional innovation
D. Participatory and demand-driven R&D activities and the capacity for collective action
A19. Answer: C

Q20. Which of the following characteristics were used to assess the case studies' multi-stakeholder processes?

A. Systems trade-offs, multiple commodities, scaling up innovations and learning from failure
b. Facilitation, organization, documentation and research
c. Increasing productivity, responsible NRM innovations, institutional innovation
D. Participatory and demand-driven R&D activities and the capacity for collective action
A20. Answer: D

Q21. Which of the following characteristics were used to assess the case studies' platform support functions?

A. Systems trade-offs, multiple commodities, scaling up innovations and learning from failure
B. Facilitation, organization, documentation and research
C. Increasing productivity, responsible NRM innovations, institutional innovation
D. Participatory and demand-driven R&D activities and the capacity for collective action
A21. Answer: B

Q22. Which of the following characteristics were used to assess the case studies' outcomes and impact?

A. Systems trade-offs, multiple commodities, scaling up innovations and learning from failure
B. Facilitation, organization, documentation and research
C. Increasing productivity, responsible NRM innovations, institutional innovation
D. Participatory and demand-driven R&D activities and the capacity for collective action
A22. Answer: A

Advanced level

Class activity

Q23. None of the case studies submitted to the ILRI IP case study competition addressed the ability to learn from failure. Work together to brainstorm a list of issues that could cause an innovation platform to fail and describe what lessons researchers could learn as a result.

A23. Learners are free to come up with an exhaustive list of answers, but will likely focus on problems that could potentially arise in multi-stakeholder processes, content matter and platform support functions.

Synthesis: Multi-stakeholder processes help achieve IP outcome and impact

Introductory level

Discussion questions

Q24. What do the case studies included in Innovation platforms for agricultural development indicate about participatory processes and demand-driven activities?

A24. Some of the case studies featured in this volume support previous findings of the importance of fostering a participatory process that will lead to demand-driven activities, which can, in turn, contribute to achieving expected outcomes. The most notable example of this is the CIALCA IP in Burundi, DRC and Rwanda, in which various national multi-stakeholder platforms emerged spontaneously to fulfil the mutual needs of farmers, government officials, the private sector and other agricultural stakeholders. As a result, different stakeholders joined the platform, which proved useful because the IP had different viewpoints, sources of knowledge and expertise at their disposal. MilkIT in India and Mukono-Wakiso in Uganda also demonstrate the roles that multi-stakeholder meetings can play in identifying resource and knowledge gaps. In contrast, NLA members in Nicaragua found themselves locked into a top-down model in which experts identified the solution and determined the nature of the intervention. The IP then provided training to the farmers, who had no say in the content of the agribusiness training delivered by the platform.

Q25. Which of the case studies included in Innovation platforms for agricultural development best illustrates capacity development for collective agency and action? Why did it succeed in this regard?

A25. The NLA case from Nicaragua provides the best example of an IP investing in the capacity development of its members to provide them with more autonomy. Because the NLA's objective was to develop capacities in agribusiness management among farmers' cooperatives and smallholder farmers, the NLA provided training on managing farmers' groups to representatives of national farmers' groups, who then snowballed the training within their own networks of local farmers' groups down to individual farmers. As a result, the NLA training reached representatives in 77 producers' organizations and 19,347 households throughout Nicaragua, who were then empowered to interact with market stakeholders. Thus the NLA and its capacity development process had a tangible impact at scale through the large number of Nicaraguan farmers trained.

Multiple-choice questions

Q26. Which of the following case studies did not rate highly for participatory and demand-driven research and development processes?

A. CIALCA
B. NLA
C. MilkIT
D. Mukono-Wakiso

A26. Answer: B

Q27. Which of the following case studies best exemplifies capacity development for collective agency and action?

A. NLA

B. CIALCA
C. MilkIT
D. SysCom
A27. Answer: A

Advanced level

Class activity
Q28. Several case studies in Innovation platforms for agricultural development illustrate the importance of participatory processes and demand-driven activities. Working individually or in groups, brainstorm strategies for implementing participatory processes among actors who might have different investments in an intervention.
A28. The responses will vary by group, but each response should focus on providing a voice to multiple stakeholders, especially those whom the intervention is designed to benefit.

Synthesis: Appropriate content matter leading to platform impact

Introductory level

Discussion questions

Q29. Which of the case studies in Innovation platforms for agricultural development best illustrate the impact reached through productivity innovation?

A29. Of the case studies included in innovation platforms for agricultural development, WeRATE in west Kenya. The IP conducted farmer field trials for inoculant-fertilizer blend technology for a soybean variety. The IP reached 37,000 farmer households, and there was a 64% adoption rate over four years of the N2Africa project in which WeRATE participated. This case embodies the impact at a scale that so many other IPs strive to achieve, thanks partly to its demonstrated superior technology, which was responsible for increases in farm productivity. In turn, this led to the widespread adoption and commercialization of some of the inputs or farming techniques developed by WeRATE partners.

SysCom and MilkIT, both of which were implemented in India, show a similar impact, but at a smaller scale, on cotton and milk production, respectively. SysCom's productivity innovation trials to test innovative soil fertility management techniques were key to documenting the pros and cons of organic cotton production systems, which allowed farmers to make an informed decision about the trade-offs of conventional and organic cotton production systems.

Similarly, CIALCA proved instrumental in reintroducing banana-coffee intercropping in Rwanda after their field trials yielded superior quality coffee, a development that could potentially introduce a heavier labour burden on women.

Q30. Which of the case studies included in Innovation platforms for agricultural development proved especially useful in implementing innovative natural resource management practices?

A30. Only two of the eight case studies included in Innovation platforms for agricultural development did not address environmental issues directly: Bubaare and NLA. The remaining six all incorporated NRM into their IP. Of these, the NBDC project in the Ethiopian Highlands proved especially effective. Building water bunds along steep slopes and implementing new fodder production techniques shared by the project's researchers increased protection against soil erosion and increased community awareness of the links between production, marketing, and NRM. The intervention was small in scale, but the local government wishes to replicate this intervention in other districts that are also affected by soil degradation and erosion.

SysCom in India, which developed innovative methods for organic phosphorous fertilizer production for cotton, also provides a good example of an IP's ability to influence NRM. CIALCA demonstrated how integrating various crops onto Central Africa's hilly landscapes can reduce soil erosion and lead to more resilient cropping systems.

Q31. Which of the case studies included in Innovation platforms for agricultural development illustrate the ways in which institutional innovations provide the cement from replicability and marketability?

A31. Three case studies do an especially good job of highlighting how institutional innovation contributes to development outcomes and impacts:

- CIALCA provides a good example of how to adapt collaborative arrangements with local partners according to the local institutional context, which, in turn, can impact national policy

making. In Rwanda, government institutions are relatively strong and have a good presence throughout the country, and the government's research and extension system acted as key partners. More complex arrangements linked government services and NGOs to allow innovations to reach potential end users Burundi and DRC. In each of these countries, CIALCA tailored its messages to suit the local context. This, combined with its efforts to train future policy makers, made CIALCA effective at influencing policy in the three countries.

- The institutional collaboration fostered by the MilkIT IPs in northern India led to local government and agricultural support services to better coordinate their activities to improve dairy production and marketing. MilkIT also modelled institutional innovation by linking smallholder farmers to markets. MilkIT's marketing IPs fostered farmers' cooperatives and milk collection centres, which led to increased milk production, new milk collectors and processors developing supply chains to remote farm communities in the mountains of Uttarakhand, and increased income throughout the dairy value chain.
- The Bubaare case from Uganda features the legal innovation of registering an IP as a new multi-purpose cooperative society that mixes the benefits of farmers' cooperatives and multi-stakeholder groups. As in regular farmers' cooperatives, farmers are still allowed to group input purchases and output sales, but this new entity also enables this grouping for several commodities. In addition, the IP's past multi-stakeholder activities have created a loose network of suppliers, customers and other value-chain stakeholders who help commercialize the farmers' products around the cooperative. By becoming a legal entity, farmers in the IP can not only sell their products to higher-end markets in Kampala, but they can also do business with suppliers and customers at a larger scale and have improved access to other services, including loans. This has increased the attraction of IP membership for farmers: more than 1,000 individual farmers joined the IP after just five years. During that same period, membership of farmers' groups increased from 32 groups to 1,121 groups due to the IP's marketing services. This innovative legal framework sets a useful precedent for other countries sharing a common-law judicial tradition and serves as a model for already existing legal statuses for multi-stakeholder commodity associations.

Multiple-choice questions

Q32. How did CIALCA influence policy makers in Burundi, DRC, and Rwanda?

A. Customizing their message to suit local contexts
B. Training future policy makers
C. Both A and B
D. Neither A nor B

A32. Answer: C

Q33. How did MilkIT lead to increased incomes throughout the dairy value chain?

A. Linking smallholder farmers to markets
B. Registering an IP as a new multi-purpose cooperative society
C. Providing grants to households that purchased livestock
D. None of the above

A33. Answer: A

Q34. What was the primary innovation in the Bubaare case?

A. Linking smallholder farmers to markets
B. Registering an IP as a new multi-purpose cooperative society

C. Providing grants to households that purchased livestock
D. None of the above
A34. Answer: B

Synthesis: Well-designed platform support functions leading to impact

Introductory level

Discussion questions

Q35. Which of the case studies included in Innovation platforms for agricultural development exemplify platform support functions?

A35. While the Bubaare IP in Uganda, the NLA in Nicaragua, the MilkIT project in India all perform strongly with platform support functions, the Mukono-Wakiso IP in Uganda embodies all the aspects of platform support functions. Its facilitator from Makarere University helped the platform members to consider the needs of the farmers to identify their priority entry points and to characterize the agricultural system combinations that would work within the set of entry points selected. The platform, which was facilitated from a systems perspective from the start, agreed to work on an integrated system of crops, livestock and trees to help solve the farmers' challenges. As a result, the IP currently works on multiple commodities. From a reporting perspective, a report stating major decisions taken is generated after all Mukono-Wakiso IP events (and not just formal platform meetings), and this report is shared with all members and beyond, mainly using online repositories. As a result, the chairman, facilitator and secretariat can follow up on tasks and keep activities going. Reports also allow newcomers to catch up on previous activities and decisions. The Mukono-Wakiso's use of multi-stakeholder processes is also being studied by Humidtropics program's social scientists. This ongoing research will help the platform reflect on its content, process and support functions in order to create impact in the future.

Synthesis: Conclusion

Introductory level

Discussion questions

Q36. Overall, how well did the IPs covered in Innovation platforms for agricultural development meet the components and subcomponents of ILRI's conceptual framework for successful IPs?

A36. While most of the IPs featured fostered two out of the four components of the conceptual framework, only two, Bubaare and Mukono-Wakiso, scored highly on all four. However, neither Bubaare nor Mukono-Wakiso showed success in all nine subcomponents of successful IPs or met all three subcomponents of outcomes and impact, which are expected of mature IPs.

Q37. Why did the editors deem process, content and platform support insufficient measures of IP success?

A37. While process, content and platform support are all essential factors for an IP to be able to run and produce sustainable multi-stakeholder innovations, they are not enough to provide guaranteed impact at scale.

Conclusion: Success factors for IPs to achieve success

Introductory level

Discussion questions

Q38. How did ILRI identify success factors needed for IPs to achieve success? What are these factors?

A38. In addition to analysing their framework, ILRI also conducted interviews and facilitated exercises with each author to determine what they considered to be the most important factors leading to a successful IP. A common thread running through each interview focused on three complementary factors: vision, enabling environment and a research for development orientation.

Q39. What is 'vision,' and how can it lead to a successful IP?

A39. By having a vision, an IP is clear about where it wants to go and how it wants to get there. Leadership should not only embody and encourage this vision but should also be empowered and accountable for ensuring that the IP focus of work emerges from the commitment and common interest of participants instead of being established through an external drive to tackle a problem. Skilful facilitation is also key to an IP's vision. Facilitators take power dynamics into account and foster the participation of grass-roots actors from the bottom up. To foster trust, this facilitator should be physically present to participate regularly in platform activities. Along with leadership and facilitation, equity and transparency are essential to an IPs vision. To ensure equity and transparency, all actors in the platform should be consulted in a similar way, and all decisions taken should be discussed with the well-being of all actors in mind. Equity and transparency in the platform vision help strengthen the linkages between actors, who are then further motivated to participate.

Q40. What is an 'enabling environment,' and how can it lead to a successful IP?

A40. An enabling environment allows IPs to thrive. There are three components to a successful enabling environment:

1. Linkages with public policies. This will vary by context. In some contexts, aligning platform objectives with public policies has helped platforms become essential to policy makers' engagement with grass-roots stakeholders. In other cases, IPs have supported the strengthening of public policies that were not appropriate to local contexts by triggering the development of more appropriate policies. This might involve leveraging existing networks of stakeholders to foster innovations instead of creating new platforms that duplicate work being done in parallel multi-stakeholder groups.
2. The willingness and capacity of members to participate in the innovation process. Skilful facilitation and identifying relevant incentives is key to keeping all participants invested in the process, which can lead to the reproduction and dissemination of innovations to other potential beneficiaries.
3. Incentives to keep participants interested in contributing. These will generally consist of a mix of short- and long-term benefits, but short-term monetary incentives are often necessary to attract smallholder farmers and their membership.

Q41. What is a 'research for development orientation,' and how can it lead to a successful IP?

A41. A research for development orientation requires participants to develop and try innovative science practices. Applying scientific principles to solve real-life, concrete problems, combined with the participatory nature of research trials, creates a meaningful link between science and practices. IPs should begin by applying science to a joint and concrete problem faced by platform members, then prioritize research activities that are likely to generate quick results in order to foster interest among participants

and provide incentives for their continued participation. Participatory action research (PAR) is useful in facilitating embedded research for development.

Multiple-choice questions

Q42. What factors did case study authors identify as being crucial for an IPs success?

A. Vision
B. Enabling environment
C. Research for development orientation
D. All of the above

A42. Answer: D

Q43. Equity and transparency are key to an IP's _____?

A. Vision
B. Enabling environment
C. Research for development orientation
D. All of the above

A43. Answer: A

Q44. Why is it important for scientists to prioritize research activities that will yield quick results?

A. To meet stakeholder demands for profitable innovations
B. To solve critical problems quickly to secure funding
C. To maintain participants' interest and incentivize further participation
D. All of the above

A44. Answer: C

Conclusion: Success factors for IPs to achieve success

Introductory level

Discussion questions

Q45. What do the entrants in ILRI's IP case study competition and case studies included in Innovation platforms for agricultural development suggest about the state of IPs in AR4D?

A45. The case studies submitted to the competition and those included in Innovation platforms for agricultural development suggest that the IP sector has yet to mature. Not only did the competition receive no entrants in the 'learning from failures' category, but the entrants to the other categories often failed to demonstrate key qualities of the category in a 'pure' fashion. For example, cases in the rather than truly offering a multi-commodity approach, cases submitted to that category often dealt with multiple crops, not the holistic crop-livestock-tree interaction advocated by researchers. Likewise, scaling cases often reached the low thousands in direct outreach. While this is an impressive feat in difficult environments, it is nowhere near as large as the billions of farmers that large-scale initiatives aim to reach.

Q46. What final thoughts do the authors share about IPs and agricultural development?

A46. The authors offer four main final questions and thoughts:

1. They ask, 'Why is the landscape the way it is?' They report that while most platforms are set up instead of emerging from contexts, they nevertheless maintain a narrow focus that is disconnected from the holistic objectives promoted by those who set up these IPs. Proposed causes for this include short project cycles, the desire to show quick results, a focus on short-term financial incentives or the narrow focus of anchor projects, which limits the ability to integrate broader, sustainable incentives. The case studies indicate that it is key to avoiding narrow processes and instead become multifunctional by embracing multi-dimensional processes.
2. They ask, 'Are IPs the most appropriate instrument to foster agricultural development?' As the authors point out, IPs can have an impact, but are the solutions they offer scalable and replicable? A more rigorous framework and more extensive data are needed to compare and assess IP work with a range of other intervention strategies.
3. When analysing the cases and framework findings, the authors felt that IPs could act as a potentially powerful 'bridge' between local approaches that embody participatory, demand-driven and community-led initiatives and global 'large-scale impact' technology-driven initiatives.
4. IP conceptual frameworks require a more balanced approach if they are to act as a bridge and assume an integrative role alongside other approaches for inclusive agricultural development. These frameworks should take local innovations into account, but also consider whether they would be suitable for larger-scale replication. They must also take a hard look at both direct and indirect costs to produce a more accurate analysis of benefits per dollar invested.

Advanced level

Discussion questions

Q47. The authors generate a list of questions and observations designed to provide more insight into IPs and their suitability for solving problems and fostering development in agricultural settings. What questions and observations would you add to this list? Why would you add these questions and observations?

A47. Participants' answers will vary but may address issues such as gender, class and the context of the IP.